TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

Purposes of This Paper

The purposes of these papers are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church; finance, religious education, community relationships; and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The paper will be an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program," that will encourage a national "rural church movement." The paper will be closely linked with a regularly held National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country.

Contributors

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This Issue
No. 29
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Community-Minded Churches in Town and Country

C. M. McCONNELL

• In a certain sense "community" is a state of mind. A community-minded church in town or open country is one that thinks of its community as a geographical area, a group of people living within this geographical area and a number of organizations which serve the people in the area. This area with its people and institutions is the church's community. If the people of the local church, minister and laymen, look upon the community as a field of service rather than a good location for a church to be built up and maintained by people who join it, the church may be called community-minded.

Community Mindedness or Separation

This community-minded church is made up of individuals who share its Christian beliefs, accept its moral patterns and enjoy one another's fellowship as a working, serving, group who are trying to live a co-operative Christian life. In a sense they are come-outers. For their ways of life may separate them from selfish and non-cooperative people who choose to remain aloof from a community-minded group.

But the doctrine of "separatism" which prompts church members in a community to associate on the sole basis of a Christian belief or type of ritual, or method of church administration or anything else, as though the community were non-existent, is against community-mindedness.

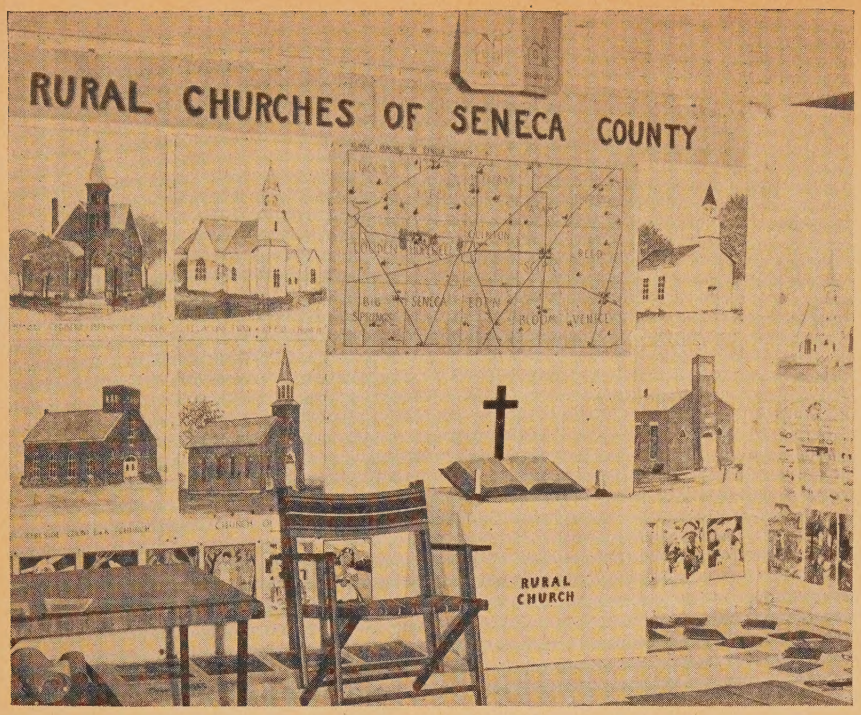
This type of "separatism" could get along without a church or local parish. All that would be needed would be a local recruiting station or skeleton of organization to go into a community and preach a certain religious doctrine or promote a certain kind of behavior and get the names on some roster of a general religious organization. Many denominations have become dangerously near this condition now. They consist of thousands or millions of members with a vast network of overhead boards, bureaus, committees, officials at large and numerous headquarters.

Members of What?

But in the final run-down of membership you will find every member belonging to some local church in some community. Nobody lives at large and detached from some environment. There are no Methodists or Baptists at large. There was a lone Methodist in a little New Hampshire community who called himself a "General Methodist." Years ago he joined a Methodist church in a distant city and for thirty years had been "at large" as a Methodist. Finally an enterprising pastor got him to transfer his membership to the local Methodist Church and thereby become a local Methodist and incidentally double the membership of the church. And he is not alone in trying to maintain a church membership apart from his community and local environment.

The danger that lurks in this non-community, detached, church relationship to a local community has all but eliminated the church in rural communities in underprivileged regions. If a community is not large enough or prosperous enough to warrant a denomination making the investment of funds and leadership and management necessary for the building and maintenance of a church, the community is written off and abandoned as a church field. Naturally the denomination is on the prowl for "promising fields" which offer a prospect of speedy self support for a local church.

If anyone doubts this statement let him travel around in the United States and view the rural landscape dotted with abandoned churches in poor but well populated communities. Very few rural churches have died for lack of people to whom to minister. But thousands have died for lack of support and leadership afforded by the local community. The people were not of the particular social or economic or mental material of the denomination. The mi-



Planning Together for the Enlarged Rural Community

grant, fly-by-night sects take over and preach a brand of "separatism" which sings, "Heaven is my home, I am but a stranger here."

To Serve or Be Served

We had just as well make up our minds first as last and save operating time that any church which seeks to build up an organization or an institution out of the community's life as an end in itself will disappear from the rural scene. Even mission churches without local support will vanish when they become outposts of a denomination or beach heads where a religious raiding party has made a landing.

But all that is necessary as a beginning is a change of mind on the part of both the local and general church, if for the sake of the discussion we may call any church *general.* If the local church defines its community and sets out to serve all who live therein and "pastors" institutions and organizations as well as individuals it can still be a denominational church. It may even be called a community church and still not be community-minded. If the denomination or the local church will be Christian enough to accept the working principle of losing its own life, if necessary, to serve and save the community it can qualify as a community-minded Christian Church.

Set Apart—For What?

The question of local church competition arises to haunt everyone who aims to serve a community through a church. In a little town two ministers were working for community enrichment and development. One got word that he should quit cooperating and get to work building up his own church by "going it alone." In another rural community the churches began to plan for the building of a recreational center for the long neglected youth. In a minister's meeting called for such a distinctly cooperative purpose one minister asked. "Will non church youth be allowed to use the recreational center"? Of course the answer was "Yes." Whereupon the church-centered minister replied, "Then count me out, for my church will not let its young people play with unbelievers." Maybe he did not know that jails are undenominational and allow people of all faiths to enter even without benefit of clergy.

A long while ago a great rural sociologist said that churches are the most divisive forces in a rural community. If they are, they sin against the community and God himself. It is possible for churches to work together for the community's Christianization and for the time being maintain their separate identity. But not on a missionary support, unless we want to make mission boards merely the general staff of a local competitive army of the Lord. Or maybe just an army.

Out of community-minded churches may come Christian Rural communities which will be "the community of God on earth."

Rural Churches at the State Fair

• The rural Baptist churches of Iowa, under the leadership of Carlton W. Saywell, displayed an attractive exhibit at the State Fair. Two spaces were secured. A model rural church house was constructed, with the display and exhibit materials on the inside. Materials on various activities and projects were displayed along with literature on the rural church and rural life.

Rural Education

• At the North Atlantic Regional Conference on Rural Life and Education, farm leaders suggested the following changes in education: 1. Common problems of daily living should be closely linked to education; 2. Children should understand why the farmer receives less than one third of every dollar the consumer spends for farm products; 3. What soil is and how to conserve it should be taught; 4. How to have a good living on a farm by the use of modern conveniences and machinery should replace less important subjects.

These suggestions, if implemented, will mean some drastic changes. Why not try to point what these farm leaders said to the public educators so as to fit the objects of religious education? What kind of changes would become necessary?

• The North Dakota Interchurch Council held a conference attended by representatives of six denominations which laid plans for a Protestant rural life conference to be held next summer. Why should not every state have a Protestant Rural Life Conference?

How Shall the Country Church Survive?

SHIRLEY E. GREENE

• By training and by conviction I find myself approaching the country church with a two-fold view. I am interested in that church as a rural sociologist. I am also interested in that church as a servant of Jesus Christ. Looking at the country church as a sociologist I discover that it is truly a social institution, subject to forces and factors similar to those which influence the home, the school, the farmer's organization, and every other rural institution. As a clergyman I discover that this same church is a truly divine institution subject to powers and purposes which come from God. The tragedy of the country church today is the distance which exists between its commission as a divine institution and its effectiveness as a social institution.

To illustrate the nature of the country church in the Merom Region (Southern Illinois and Southern Indiana) let me give you a few facts from a recent religious survey of a single county. Sixty-three churches exist in the county. They represent twenty different denominations. All together they reach in terms of formal membership about 40% of the people of the county. When you search out that forty per cent of nominal members, however, you find only about one-half active in the church. In short, only one person in five in this county really participates in the life of the church.

Some Data

Sixteen of the 63 churches are in the county seat, a city of nearly 10,000. Fifteen more are in the towns, villages and hamlets of the county.

Grace Evangelical Church, Aredale, Iowa

Thirty-two, or half of all the churches are in the open country. Sixty per cent of all the churches have less than 100 members. For the town and country churches alone, 75% have less than 100 members.

There are thirty-four ministers related to these sixty-three churches. Fourteen are the full-time resident pastors of churches in the county seat. Seven are ministers who live outside the county but drive in once or twice a month to preach at some church in the county. This leaves thirteen ministers to serve forty-two churches, or an average of three churches per minister. Of course, these are not distributed equally. Some preachers have four churches. Some churches have no preacher. Only three of the open country churches and one of the town churches can be said to have the full-time attention of a resident pastor. One of these four is Catholic, and another is in a town of 1600 population. In the case of a third the pastor is a retired school teacher with no special training for ministerial work. Thus only one strictly rural protestant church in this county is to be found with a full-time, trained, resident minister.

Consequently

With this kind of disunity, smallness of size and inadequacy of leadership, it is not strange that we find the country churches of this county generally shabby, run-down, and listless. They "carry on" a routine Sunday School procedure, one or two preaching services a month, an annual revival that doesn't revive anybody and a ladies aid that doesn't aid anything. Two or three families usually pay most of the bills and "boss the church." People say "we wouldn't want to live in a community without a church," but they do little to keep the church strong. Or again they often say, "Oh we must keep the church open, else we would have no place to hold funerals."

Most of these churches are without joy, without hope, without vision —and the people perish!

A Divine Institution

The church as a divine institution ought to be the greatest institution in every community. As a social institution it is a weak and declining force in most rural places. The problem of the country church is how to rescue it from the *margins* and restore it to the *center* of community life.

It is curious how simple the answer is in theory, yet how difficult of application. The country church would be the greatest institution in the community? Then let it hear and follow its master who said: He who would be the greatest among you, let him be *the servant of all.*

How tragically we have lost the outgoing quality of ministry to human need which characterized our Lord himself. When he confronted a hungry crowd, he fed them. When he found men sick he healed them. When he discerned problems of human adjustment he turned teacher and gave men courses in applied psychology, applied sociology, applied ethics. When he realized that the party was about to be a flop, he turned the water into wine. When he saw a man paralyzed because of an unresolved moral conflict in his life, he said "Thy sins are forgiven thee, . . ." and so cured the man's functional disorder. "And the common people heard him gladly."

Now look at your church in the light of that example. Isn't it true that your approach to men is actually something like this: If you have the same color of skin we have, if you get about the same income we have, if you wear the same kind of clothes we wear, if you went the same distance in school that we went, you may come to our church. And then if you do come to our church,

sit in our pews, sing our hymns, pray our prayers, listen to our sermons, and subscribe to our creeds,—then you are entitled to such fellowship and such service as we are able to extend to you without too seriously disarranging the customary routine of our own lives.

For Abundant Life

Merom Institute has interested itself in promoting soil conservation that present and future generations of hungry may be fed. We have organized self-help cooperatives (in depression years) that living standards may be raised and the naked clothed. We have baked whole-wheat, whole bran bread that bodies weakened by inadequate diet may be healed. We have conducted programs of community recreation that strangers may be taken in and incorporated in the life of the community and that Christian character may be developed by wholesome leisure time activity. We have established a community laundry, that a bit of drudgery of life might be lifted from the backs of our womenfolk. We have held classes in prenatal and child care, that a new generation might start with a better physical and mental heritage than the old.

All of this, and many other community services we have done because we read somewhere that: Inasmuch as ye do it unto one of these least, ye do it unto the great King, and because we have believed that that institution that would be greatest in the rural community must be the servant of all the people.

God Has Been Good to US

• The B.A.E. crop report indicates that the United States wheat crop for 1946 will be 44,000,000 bushels larger than any other wheat crop ever produced in this country. While the corn crop has met with some diverse weather, it is still expected to top all other corn crop records. Along with this goes the announcement that the majority of fruit and vegetable crops are running from one to ten per cent greater than any previous record.

Another Rural Church Executive

• Readers will rejoice to hear that the National Baptist Convention has made arrangement for an executive to head their new department of rural church work. Rev. V. A. Edwards, a graduate of Drew Theological Seminary with a Master's degree in rural sociology and agricultural economics from Cornell University, has been chosen to fill the position. With a background of experience from a rural pastorate, six years of teaching in Moorehouse College and Georgia State Teachers and Agricultural College and for the past six years as director of a Rural Religious Extension Service in Georgia sponsored by the Home Missions Council, he comes to his position rich in training and experience.

"One seeks in vain for a case in which the large-scale organization of agriculture has produced among the masses a prosperous, sturdy, independent, self-reliant, and well-informed citizenry."

—*T. Lynn Smith,* Rural Sociology, p. 292.

Spiritual Forces

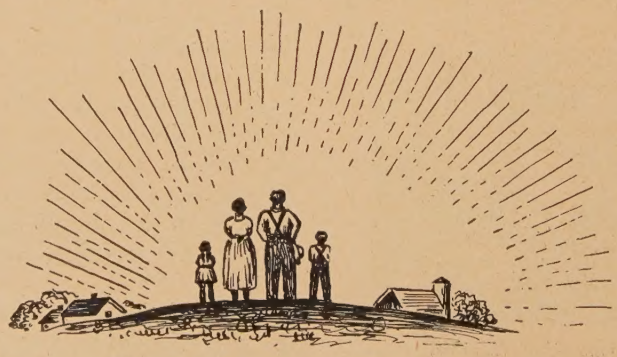
• The forces and institutions that make for morality and spiritual ideals among rural people must be energized. We miss the heart of the problem if we neglect to foster personal character and neighborhood righteousness. The best way to preserve ideals for private conduct and public life is to build up the institutions of religion. The church has great power of leadership. The whole people should understand that it is vitally important to stand behind the rural church and to help it to become a great power in developing concrete country life ideals. It is especially important that the country church recognize that it has a social responsibility to the entire community as well as a religious responsibility to its own group of people.

—From: "Report of the Commission on Country Life"

Three Things

Three things must always be
To keep a nation strong and free;
One is a hearth, bright and dear
With busy, happy, loved ones near;
One is a ready heart and hand
To love and serve and keep the land;
One is a worn and beaten way
To where the people go to pray.
So long as these are kept alive
Nation and people will survive.
God keep them always, everywhere
The HEARTH, the FLAG, the PLACE OF PRAYER.

—From 4-H Club Bulletin on Rural Life Sunday, 1946.



The Seed-Bed for a Christian America

Town & Country Church

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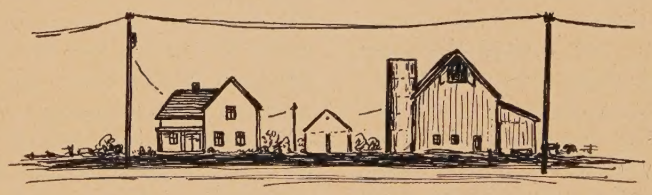
A NATIONAL CONVOCATION
ON THE CHURCH IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

Des Moines, Iowa — **November 12-14, 1946**

- Key-note Address—*New Facts about Rural Life*
  CARL C. TAYLOR, Head, Division of Farm Population and Rural Welfare, U.S.D.A., Bureau of Agricultural Economics.
- Mass Meeting Wednesday Night
  Speaker—G. BROMLEY OXNAM, Bishop of the Methodist Church and President of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ.
- Concluding Address—*The Rural Church in These Moving Times*
  HERMANN N. MORSE, Executive Secretary, Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church U.S.A.
- Commission and Panel discussions of pertinent issues in which you take part.
- Rural Life interpreted in song.
- Hearts lifted up and consecrated in worship.

Housing is adequate but in great demand. Make your reservation early: do it now. A post card is sufficient. Send it to:

COMMITTEE ON TOWN AND COUNTRY, 297 Fourth Ave., N. Y. 10, N. Y.



What Cooperative Electrification Means to America

• Claude R. Wickard, administrator, Rural Electrification, before the American Institute of Cooperation, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana, August 30, said in part:

REA co-ops are owned, operated and controlled by the people they serve. Their membership is open to anyone in need of electric service who can be served by an REA co-op. Their elected officials are chosen democratically by and from the membership. They are non-profit organizations, organized solely for the purpose of serving rural people in need of electric service. . . .

The program which the REA co-ops are carrying out today grew out of a great unsatisfied need on the part of our rural people. Central station electric service was developed in this country over a half century ago; yet as late as 1935 its benefits were confined almost wholly to the urban areas. In 1935 only one out of every ten of our farms enjoyed this modern necessity. . . .

The only way the Nation can get full benefit from this essential service is for all rural people to have it at the lowest possible cost, and the only way to achieve that objective is through *cooperative* rural electrification.

Let's examine that statement in the light of history. In 1935, the Rural Electrification Administration was created and 100 million dollars was made available for loans. . . . It was thought that credit on liberal terms would encourage commercial companies to build distribution lines into rural areas which they had so long neglected. . . . But in 1935, as today, the commercial companies belittled the size of the farm electrification job to be done. . . .

Consolidated Schools Challenge the Leadership of the Rural Church

Some Advantages of Circuits

THOMAS ALFRED TRIPP

• Multiple parishes in rural areas are as normal as single-church pastorates. Church organization in town and country may be described by a formula like Abe Lincoln's statement about the desirable length for a man's legs when he said, "Both legs should reach the ground!" So with the rural parish; it should meet the need.

Throughout the history of the rural church movement the fallacy has existed that yoked fields or circuits were no better than necessary evils. On the contrary, such parish arrangements may be very beneficial. Certainly, they are frequently made necessary by enlarging farm units, sparse population, depleted country areas and small churches too weak to stand alone.

Moral Right

A well-trained, well-paid Protestant ministry is too expensive for many rural communities. Through a yoked field or circuit, several rural churches may be able to cooperate in supporting a pastor and program which no one of them can afford alone. A rural pastor with an area too small or with too few people for his energy and talents has an inadequate job for his own growth as a leader.

Furthermore, no church has the moral right to the full time of a pastor, even if it can afford to pay him, when neighboring weak churches are leaderless. Through a circuit vigorous rural ministers can serve small churches and still develop full use of their powers. Strong churches can help the weak and weak churches can unite for mutual strength.

Discover Community

Another advantage of circuits is their implications for the discovery of the modern community. Many pastors with the urban philosophy of one-church-per-pastor pattern miss this point. If a pastor has a three-church circuit, for instance, he does not have three separate jobs, as some rural pastors are inclined to believe. He has *one* job composed of the work of three neighborhoods lying along a valley, in a section of a trade zone, in the corner of a county or some other inter-related area. The element of unity making the circuit a single job inherent in the sociological relatedness of the several neighborhoods of the parish and in the common planning dealing with all the needs in contiguous areas of similar problems. This concept involves some degree of cooperation among the several churches of the circuit, however informal that cooperation may be.

Circuits not having sociological unity should not be organized. Circuits crossing other parishes or connecting unrelated neighborhoods are awkward arrangements. Such unnatural arrangements are usually wasteful instruments of sectarianism and denominational competition.

Sunday Schools

Again, a concern of rural ministers serving circuits is the problem of their Sunday schools which they never see when they must preach at two or more churches on Sunday morning, alternating with the Sunday school hour in each case. This situation may be a blessing in disguise, however. Few pastors make the best use of the church school hour when he can attend every session. How much better it would be if every pastor were to meet his religious educational leaders for planning and training during the week than to merely pass off his educational duties by aimlessly visiting the school on Sunday morning or, worse, teaching the leaderless class for which he should have enlisted a teacher in the first place? Perchance, if the pastor has a circuit and can never see his Sunday schools, he will be reminded of the desirability of selecting leaders carefully and meeting them regularly to give them help that will multiply his ministry severalfold while he is preaching at the other end of the circuit.

Such are some values of circuits. Should not rural church leaders lay hold on the fact that town and country communities can often be more effectively served through cooperation between churches which may strengthen themselves and each other by having the same pastor and common programs? It is hoped that rural ministers may become sufficiently rural-minded to adapt churchmanship to rural needs rather than to force urban parish organization upon town and country people. Multiple parishes will succeed if adequate thought is given to their organization and to improving the work of the modern "circuit-riding."

• "Recent studies have indicated that 65% of the members of the Methodist Church, 35,000 of its churches and 67% of its pastors, are in places having fewer than 10,000 people."

—*Thomas L. Bailey,*
Governor of Mississippi

Churchmen of Tomorrow

• At Lakeside, Ohio, during September 3-6 about four hundred young men gathered to reconsider their responsibility to the Church. Among the delegates were a few ministers, and a few conscientious objectors but by far the largest majority were veterans of military service. A choice group of speakers brought messages of information and inspiration but more significant were the twelve hours spent in workshop sessions. In these the delegates had their say with only a discussion guide and a resource leader to impede their progress.

It was my privilege to act as the discussion guide for the group representing the small churches from the small communities. Let me give you two things: My personal reactions and a summary of the reactions of the group.

I believe this conference was significant. Its value will be measured a decade hence in the lives of churchmen coming from this group. The first images in a new vision of the CHURCH AT WORK found their way into many hearts. Evidence of the fact lies in the earnest questions which were asked. Questions as to what Church organization had been responsible for this or that service, what this or that organization did, why had they not heard of these in the home church, etc. But more significant, the bonds of the Christian fellowship were drawn tighter and became more obvious. Eleven denominations were represented in our group but not one tenth of the discussion centered in the distinctions. Problems and concerns were common to all.

Part of the last session of our workshop was given to testimonials; what the men had learned and what they intended to do about it. It was like a dynamic prayer meeting and such it was. Any report would be inadequate to say nothing of a brief summary. Five things stand out: 1. A growing sense of Christian unity and a favorable conviction for it. 2. The importance of laymen and the part they must play in revitalizing the local church. 3. The men discovered with amazement the strategic place which a churchman can fill in the civic life of the community. 4. The importance of the struggle the Church carries on to establish the value of human life in the social order. 5. This fellowship and common understanding reached had strengthened faith in the Church and its cause.

A printed report of the Conference will be available from Reuben Coleman, 297 4th Ave., New York 10, N. Y.

—D.F.P.

Creative Recreation Builds Personality

Million Veterans Working on Farms

• More than a million veterans of World War II had returned to farm work in the U.S. by July 1, the BAE announced in a preliminary report. There were 1,045,000 veterans employed on farms, 713,000 as farm operators and members of farm operators' families and 332,000 as hired workers.

What Would You Do?

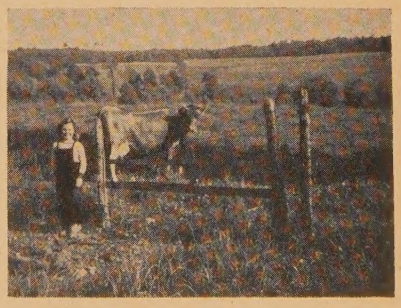
• A survey of Franklinville, New York, has come to this office. There are 3,153 people in the community; one-third of these are farm folk. There has been a decline in the total population since 1930 of 5% to 10%. There are six active Protestant church organizations and one Roman Catholic. Fifteen per cent of the Protestant families are not represented in the community by the church of their choice and seldom attend. Another 5.8% of all families have no church relation and no preference. Of the 404 children, 5 to 17 years of age, 48% never attend Sunday School, yet 65% live within a mile of a church. Only 10% of those 18 to 25 years of age attended Sunday School once or more during the year. The average attendance at Sunday School represents only 10% and the average attendance at worship only 12.5% of the non-Catholic population. The Protestant churches are definitely failing to reach farm folk, young adults and youth. What would you do about it if you lived in Franklinville?

Heifers for Relief

• Church World Service, in a news release, says, "The shortage of livestock has been one of the most crucial factors in the food picture. As a result, the sending of cattle from America—an enterprise started by the churches—'has been one of the most dramatic evidences of good will and Christian friendship that could be devised.' The Italian Department of Agriculture has cooperated in every way to help place these cattle where they would achieve the most good."

Men and Missions

• November 17 is to be known as "Men and Missions Sunday." It is hoped 50,000 pastors will have some of their laymen participate in the program and speak briefly concerning the missionary enterprise. A manual of suggestions are available from the Laymen's Missionary Movement, 19 South LaSalle Street, Chicago 3, Illinois.



A Priest to the Temple

GEORGE HERBERT

The Parson's Courtesy

• The Country Parson owing a debt of charity to the poor and of courtesy to his other parishioners, he so distinguisheth, that he keeps his money for the poor, and his table for those that are above alms. Not but that the poor are welcome also to his table, whom he sometimes purposely takes home with him, setting them close by him, and carving for them, both for his own humility and their comfort, who are much cheered with such friendliness. But since both is to be done, the better sort invited, and meaner relieved, he chooseth rather to give the poor money, which they can better employ to their own advantage, and suitably to their needs, than so much given in meat at dinner. Having then invited some of his parish, he taketh his times to do the like to the rest; so that in the compass of the year he hath them all with him, because country people are very observant of such things, and will not be persuaded but, being not invited, they are hated. Which persuasion the parson by all means avoids, knowing that where there are such conceits there is no room for his doctrine to enter. Yet doth he oftenest invite those whom he sees take best courses, that so both they may be encouraged to persevere, and others spurred to do well, that they may enjoy the like courtesy. For though he desire that all should live well and virtuously, not for any reward of his, but for virtue's sake; yet that will not be so; and therefore as God, although we should love Him only for His own sake, yet out of His infinite pity hath set forth heaven for a reward to draw men to piety, and is content if at least so they will become good. So the country parson, who is a diligent observer and tracker of God's ways, sets up as many encouragements to goodness as he can, both in honour, and profit, and fame, that he may, if not the best way, yet any way, make his parish good.

Farm Population

• "During 1945, the farm population of the United States showed a net increase for the first year since 1932, according to estimates of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. The number of people living on farms was estimated at 25,990,000 in January, 1946 which was 800,000 more than the beginning of 1945. Over half of the net increase in population was due to men returning to farms from the armed services. The remaining increase was due to the customary excess of births over deaths in the farm population. The Pacific division had the highest rate of increase, seven per cent, followed by the mountain division with a five per cent increase."

Changes in Farming in War and Peace, by Sherman E. Johnson. Published by the U.S.D.A.

This mimeographed pamphlet of about 100 pages carries some fairly pertinent material with which every farming community should be acquainted. A few glimpses into the contents show, "Farm output averaged 120% of prewar for the years 1942-44;" "Weather affecting farm production in 1942-44 was 10%-15% more favorable."

Other reasons for this great peak of production were the potential possibilities of increase developed during the thirties which had not been utilized, such as improved farm mechanization, the knowledge concerning the use of fertilizers and lime, and the improvement of crop varieties. Increased land use can account for only about 3% of the total increase.

In spite of rationing and heavy exports, our civilians consumed 10% more during the war years than during 1935-39. This was made possible by the production of more food crops and less fiber crops.

It is expected that our production and efforts will continue to advance rather than to reverse to prewar levels. This has serious implications in it for the economic stability of the rural community. To have a satisfactory market outlet, it would mean the maintenance of exports at the 1920 level, that our increased production should be consumed by an increasing population and then that the present level of consumption must be increased 10%. This indicates the great concern a farming community should have for the purchasing power of urban people who constitute slightly more than 50% of our population at present.

The Church Bus, by Ralph A. Felton. Available from the Home Missions Council of North America, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. 10 cents, single copies. Quantity rates.

This 25-page pamphlet is an interesting study of 66 churches which have been using busses to solve a transportation problem. It goes into the advisability of renting or purchasing a bus and the cost of operation, how the busses are paid for and the result in church attendance and church membership. The churches which own their own busses use them four times as much as the churches which rent. Increases in the attendance due to the use of a bus range from 30% for a single service to as much as 77% for all services. One difficulty was constantly met by the churches; that is, that they made arrangements for busses which were too small.

This pamphlet should be an excellent guide for any rural church which is interested in using a bus.

Harvest Festival

• The annual release of a Harvest Festival Order of Service is now being distributed. It contains a suggested program of worship along with a statement as to the development of the Harvest Festival program. The bibliography will be helpful to pastors wishing to observe this occasion.

Programs are available at five cents each, with reasonable quantity rates from the Town and Country Committee, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Contributions Wanted

• Every reader is a potential contributor of material for this paper.

We need three types of material:

(1) Articles of about 900 words (to fill a page), descriptive of a local program.

(2) Short items; news, plans, publications available.

(3) Illustrations; glossy photos, line drawings, cuts of rural scenes.